

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, KU

SUBJ: KUWAIT AND THE PLO

REF: JIDDA 4836

1. THE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY IN KUWAIT, NUMBERING PERHAPS AS MANY AS 275,000, IS REPRESENTED IN VIRTUALLY EVERY STRATUM OF SOCIETY, AND, IN ADDITION TO GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONARIES, INCLUDES LARGE NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL MEN, MERCHANTS OF GREATER OR LESSER IMPORTANCE AND INFLUENCE, AND SMATTERING OF PEOPLE IN POLICE AND ARMY

(MOST OF LAST GROUP ARE ON VERGE OF, OR HAVE ALREADY, OBTAINED KUWAITI NATIONALITY).

2. THERE ARE NO PALESTINIAN ARMED UNITS ATTACHED EITHER TO KUWAIT ARMY OR EXISTING INDEPENDENTLY UNDER LOCAL PLO OFFICE. AS A MATTER OF FACT, LOCAL SECURITY AUTHORITIES REGARD IT AS ONE OF THEIR TOP PRIORITIES TO SEE THAT PALESTINIANS HERE DO NOT ACQUIRE AIVS. THEY HAVE REPORTEDLY INTERCEPTED SMALL SHIPMENTS INTENDED FOR RADICAL PALESTINIAN GROUPS AT VARIOUS TIMES IN PAST. A PARTICULARLY SHARP VIGIL IS BEING KEPT AT PRESENT, AS TYPIFIED BY NIGHT-TIME ROAD BLOCK WHICH HAVE BEEN INSTITUTED WITHIN LAST MONTH TO IDENTIFY FOREIGNERS HERE WITHOUT RESIDENCE PERMITS. THIS IS AIMED PRIMARILY AT PALESTINIANS.

3. QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN ROLE AND POTENTIAL HERE IS SUBJECT

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OFTEN REAIDED BY EMBASSY. CONSISTENT VIEW OF SENIOR GOK

OFFICIALS IS THAT KUWAITI PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY DOES NOT REPRESENT THREAT TO GOK BECAUSE, UNLIKE DISPLACED PERSON CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH PALESTINIANS LIVE IN LEBANON, THEY HAVE PERSONAL STAKE HERE IN FORM OF RESPONSIBLE JOBS AND GOOD INCOME AS WELL AS GOOD HOUSES AND CAR OWNERSHIP. NEVERTHELESS, RECENT TENSION IN ARAB WORLD AS RESULT DETERIORATION OF LEBANESE SITUATION ALSO REFLECTED HERE AS INDICATED PREVIOUS PARAGRAPH. MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND DEFENSE SHEIKH SA'AD REVEALED TO AMBASSADOR RECENTLY THAT HIS TOTAL CONCENTRATION ON HIS INTERIOR DUTIES PREVENTED HIM FROM GIVING CONSIDERATION TO CERTAIN MILITARY MATTERS UNDER MUTUAL DISCUSSION.

4. THE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN INTENTIONS REGARDING KUWAIT IN EVENT OF THREATENED LIQUIDATION OF THE MOVEMENT IN LEBANON IS ALSO A VERY LIVE ONE IN MINDS OF LEADING KUWAITI OFFICIALS AS WELL AS OURSELVES. WE HAVE NOTED THAT IN RECENT PUBLIC APPEALS BY ARAFAT (AND JUMBLATT) TO ARAB GOVERMENTS TO INTERCEDE AND SAVE THE REVOLUTION IN LEBANON, GOK HAS BEEN CONSPICUOUSLY LEFT OUT. WE INTERPRET THIS TO MEAN THAT PLO IS REASONABLY CONTENT WITH SUPPORT IT IS ALREADY GETTING FROM GOK AND, FOR TIME BEING, WE TEND TO GO ALONG WITH ANALYSIS THAT KUWAIT IS TOO IMPORTANT TO PLO TO FOUL PALESTINIAN NEST HERE BY TROUBLE-MAKING. NEVERTHELESS, BECAUSE THIS CONTROL IS NOT COMPLETE, WE WOULD EXPECT MORE UNDIRECTED RANDOM BOMBINGS, AND PERHAPS SOME DEMONSTRATIONS.

5. ACCORDING TO DEPPRIMIN SHEIKH JABER AL-ALI, PLO HAS SOUGHT GOK INTERCESSIONS WITH SYRIANS AND IS HOPING SAUDI-KUWAITI MEDIATION EFFORTS WILL HELP PRESERVE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON. IN FACT, KHALID AL-HASSEN, FATAH REP HERE AND ANOTHER PLO MEMBER ACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINISTER SHEIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD TO ARAB LEAGUE FORMIN MEETING WHICH BEGAN JULY 12 IN CAIRO. THUS, INSOFAR AS PLO LEADERSHIP ABLE TO CONTROL ITS FOLLOWERS IN KUWAIT, IT WILL NOT WANT THEM TO JEOPARDIZE CONTINUED KUWAITI DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT OR TO RISK LOSING PALESTINIAN REAR-BASE SAFEHAVEN WHICH KUWAIT REPRESENTS.

6. PRINCIPAL PLO REPRESENTATIVE KUWAIT IS ALI YASIN. FATAH' KHALID AL-HASSAN IS ALSO HERE AND OCCASIONALLY SHARES THE LIMELIGHT WITH YASIN. BOTH OF THEM CONSULT FREQUENTLY WITH

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INTERIOR AND FOREIGN MINISTERS.
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